

Economy

# New Opportunities for Polish-Japanese Cooperation: Diagnosis and Prospects

edited by Jolanta Młodawska-Bronowska



# The YKK Group as a global company in Poland

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The YKK Group is a Japanese group of manufacturing companies. As the world's largest fastener/zipper manufacturer, the YKK Group is most famous for making slide fasteners; however we also manufacture other fastening products and architectural products. And we manufacture not only those products but also the industrial machinery for producing them (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** The structure of the YKK Group

**Source:** "This is YKK 2014 (YKK Corporation)", p. 5

Our Management structure is global. Manufacturing is done by the Fastening Products and Architectural Products Business Groups, with support provided by the Machinery and Engineering Group. We currently do business in 71 countries/regions worldwide, based on a geographical management structure divided into six blocs: 1) North and Central America; 2) South America; 3) Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); 4) China, 5) Asia, and 6) Japan. This regional approach enables us to adapt to the characteristics of each region to further expand our businesses. Our worldwide sales, marketing, and customer services are handled by these six geographical block organizations (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** The Six-Region Management Structure of the YKK Group

**Source:** "This is YKK" (2014), YKK Corporation, p. 4

As for our EMEA group, it consists of 38 countries and 28 companies. The number of employees total about 2,600 persons, which include about 80 Japanese expatriates (Fig. 3). Our first operating company in EMEA was the YKK Nederland established in 1964, and since that time we have been constantly increasing the number of operating companies. Regarding the V4 countries, we have two companies – YKK Poland established in 1996, and YKK Czech established in 2003. The main factories in EMEA are YKK Turkey, YKK Italy, YKK Spain and so on; the factories in V-4 belong to the smaller factory group, relatively speaking (Fig. 4).

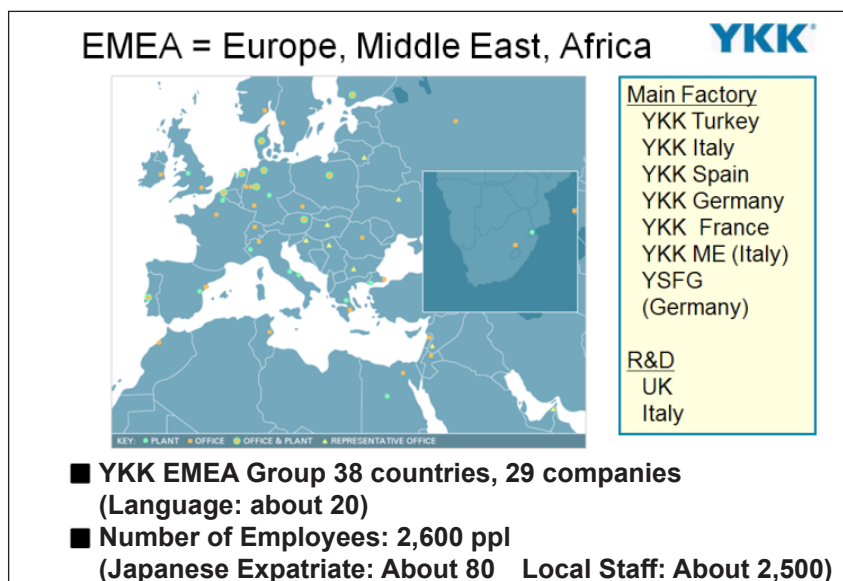


Fig. 3. The outline of the YKK EMEA Group

Source: unpublished material compiled at YKK Europe Ltd.

**EMEA Operations History** **YKK®**

Year	Month	Country Name	Company Name ( Current )
1964	3	Nederland	YKK NEDERLAND BV
1966	12	United Kingdom	YKK UK Ltd
1967	6	Germany	YKK DEUTSCHLAND GMBH
	9	France	YKK France SARL
1968	2	Italy	YKK Italia S.p.A
1970	10	Spain	YKK ESPANA SA
	12	Belium	YKK BELGIUM NV
1972	2	Lebanon	YKK MIDDLE EAST SAL
	7	Switzerland	YKK DEUTSCHLAND GMBH ( Zurich )
1975	7	Austria	YKK AUSTRIA GMBH
1976	6	Swaziland	YKK SOUTHERN AFRICA (PTY) LTD. ( Manzini )
1977	4	Italy	YKK MEDITERRANEO S.P.A.
1979	4	Egypt	( YKK ZIPPER EGYPT S.A.E. )
	11	Finland	YKK UK Ltd ( Helsinki )
1981	7	Portugal	YKK PORTUGAL Lda
1982	10	Danmark	YKK DANMARK A/S
1983	1	Ireland	YKK UK Ltd ( Dublin )
	6	Greece	YKK HELLA S.A.E.B.E.
	11	United Kingdom	YKK New Zipper
1988	12	Nederland	YKK Holding Europe B.V.
1989	11	Italy	YKK SNAP FASTENERS ITA
1990	3	United Kingdom	YKK EUROPE LTD
1991	10	Turkey	YKK METAL ve PLASTIK U
1994	10	Germany	YKK STOCKO FASTENERS
1995	6	Germany	DYNAT VERSCHLUSSTECH
1996	7	Egypt	YKK EGYPT S.A.E.
	12	Poland	YKK POLAND SP. Z O.
1997	11	Tunisia	YKK TRADING TUNISIA S.A.
2001	3	Romania	YKK ROMANIA SRL
2002	5	Russia	OOO YKK
	11	Tunisia	YKK TUNISIA S.A.
2003	3	Czech	YKK CZECH SPOL. S.R.O.
	9	Kenya	YKK KENYA EPZ LIMITED
2005	1	Morocco	YKK MAROC S.A.R.L
2007	11	Ukraine	YKK UKRAINE LLC

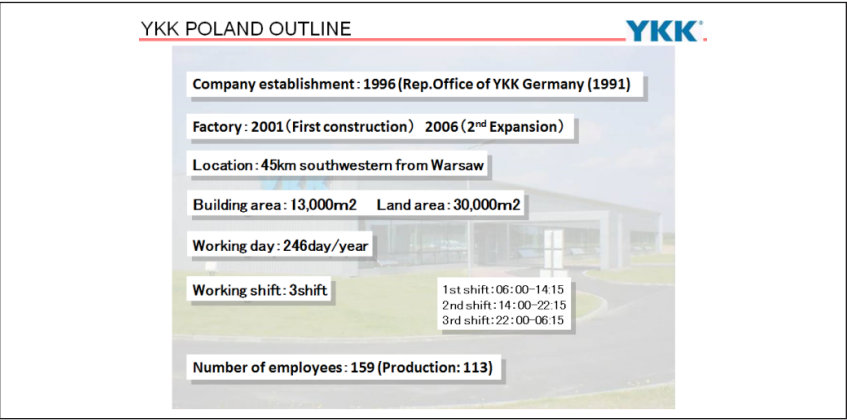
YKK Poland sp.z o.o.  
 Established in 12.1996  
 Factory Launched in 2001

YKK Czech  
 Established in 03.2003

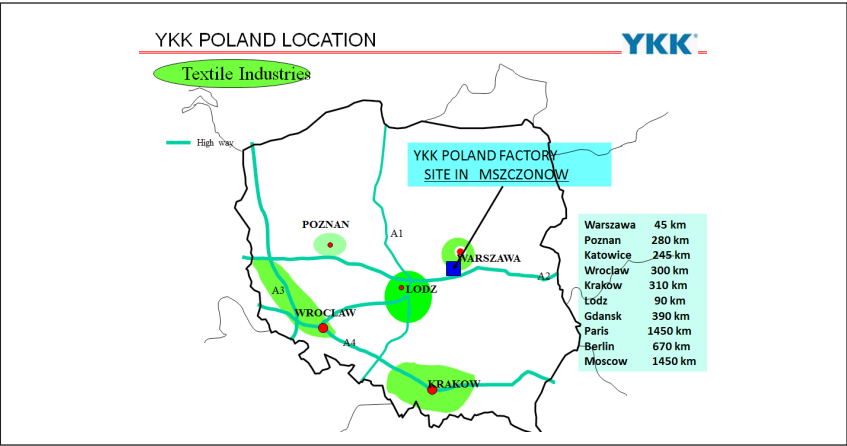
Fig. 4. YKK EMEA Group Operation history

Source: unpublished material compiled at YKK Europe Ltd.

As for YKK Poland, the first operation started as a representative office of YKK Germany in 1991. Because the operating results were so good, the independent company YKK Poland was established in 1996. Since it was growing year by year, headquarters decided to open a factory in Poland. The factory of YKK Poland was launched in 2001 and expanded in 2006. The land area is 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> and the building area is 13,000 m<sup>2</sup>. It numbers about 160 employees, 120 of whom belong to the slide fastener production. It is located in the town of Mszczonow, 45 km from Warsaw and 90 km from Lodz. Our products are provided for the domestic market such as textile industries, German CMT business, Furniture, Jeans, Shoes, Automotive etc. and also exported to Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, and the post-Soviet countries.



**Fig. 5.** Outline of YKK Poland  
**Source:** unpublished material compiled at YKK Poland Sp. z o.o.



**Fig. 6.** Location of YKK Poland  
**Source:** unpublished material compiled at YKK Poland Sp. z o.o.

Why did YKK decide to invest in Poland?

- In order to get into the domestic market by improving the service level.

- In order to get into the export business from Poland to Western Europe (Poland was the No.1 export country for Western Europe at that time).

- Business growth was very good as a sales office.

- Comparatively cheap labor costs.

Why did we chose Mszczonów?

- Good location to access. It was one hour to the airport and a highway was planned.

- Good environment for our production. It's a good location for hiring stable operators from the surrounding towns because there were no other "light industry" factories in the neighbouring area.

- Attractive preparation as an industrial park. For example, we can connect directly to the wastewater treatment facility of the local authorities.

What are the results of this investment?

- Sales to the domestic market have been continuously growing.

- Although the export base of light industry for Western Europe has already shifted from Poland to the other countries, Poland has become an important place in order to aim at the Eastern market.

- We have built up some new areas of business, such as automotive, furniture, and shoes in these 13 years of operation, and they are continuously growing.

- The infrastructure is becoming better and better, as we expected.

In conclusion, we are successfully operating and remain positive about future business. We may say that our decision to invest here in Mszczonów, which is close to Lodz, was a great success!

## Streszczenie

YKK to japońska grupa przedsiębiorstw przemysłu przetwórczego. Jest największym i najbardziej znanym w świecie producentem zamków błyskawicznych – ponad 90% globalnej podaży. Oprócz ekspresów firma

produkuje pasmanterię i inne dodatki krawieckie, ale także elementy architektoniczne (drzwi, okna, żaluzje itd.), a nawet maszyny i urządzenia do ich wytwarzania. Struktura zarządzania ma charakter globalny, tzn. produkcja nadzorowana jest przez spółki biznesowe operujące w zakresie wymienionych wyrobów, przy uwzględnieniu wsparcia ze strony spółek dostarczających sprzęt i technologię.

Obecnie YKK prowadzi działalność w 71 krajach w sześciu regionach geograficznych: 1. Ameryka Północna i Środkowa; 2. Ameryka Południowa; 3. Europa, Bliski Wschód i Afryka; 4. Chiny; 5. Azja; 6. Japonia. Pierwszym krajem europejskim, w którym wybudowano fabrykę YKK, była Holandia (1964 r.). Niezależna spółka YKK Poland powstała w 1996 r., a pierwszą fabrykę wybudowano w Mszczonowie (45 km od Warszawy) w 2001 r. Z perspektywy kilkunastu lat autor stwierdza, że był to dobry wybór. Sprzedaż na krajowy rynek polski wciąż rośnie i chociaż Polska nie jest już bazą eksportową dla przemysłu lekkiego na Europę Zachodnią, w dalszym ciągu pozostaje ważnym pryzemółkiem ekspansji na Wschód. Poszerzyła się też struktura asortymentowa i nastąpiło wejście w nowe obszary działalności: branżę motoryzacyjną, meblarską i obuwniczą. Historia firmy YKK stanowi dobry przykład udanej inwestycji w Polsce i stanowi zachętę dla innych firm japońskich.

## References

„This is YKK” (2014), YKK Corporation

This monograph covers the output of the conference titled “2014 – New Opportunities for Japan and V-4 Cooperation” and contains Japanese and Polish contributions. It offers reflections on the *statu nascendi* of economic and cultural relations between the two nations. Viewpoints and research results mirror the various interests and arguments of the scholars (mainly economists, sociologists, and japanologists), businessmen, and representatives of administrative bodies (central and local governments) who participated in the conference, all of whom are searching for common solutions.

The presented papers are very much diversified with respect to their content and writing styles. The book itself reflects an eclectic approach. The multifaceted approach to the discussed issues facilitates the comparison of expectations against real life activities. The most important goal of the book is to identify the potential for collaboration and crucial fields in which there exist challenges and a need for changes, all in the interest of leading to a new stage of reciprocally profitable relations between Poland and Japan in today’s globalised world.



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